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The Mission of Letty

A Play in Two Acts

For Female Characters Only

By
EVELYN WATSON

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
1914

PS 635
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The Mission of Letty

CHARACTERS

MISS VERONICA MORTON.
MISS DOROTHEA MORTON, *her sister.*
BARBARA, *their maid of all work.*
LETTY BALLSLEY, *an orphan, distant cousin of the Mortons.*
MRS. GREY, *a minister's wife.*
MARYBELL SHARPE
BABE MCGILL
CATHERINE PEMBERTON
} *girls of the neighborhood.*

TIME.—To-day.
SCENE.—The little town of Fairdale.

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No 1

The Mission of Letty

ACT I

SCENE.—*Curtain rises discovering living-room of the Morton home. On the right at the back, a door leading to the front hall. On the left at the back, a door leading to the dining-room. Table, chairs, and writing-desk, etc.*

Enter at opposite doors, MISS VERONICA MORTON *and* MISS DOROTHEA MORTON.

MISS D. (*seeing her sister*). Oh ! —— [*Exit hastily.*
MISS V. (*at same time*). *Excuse* me ! ——

(*Hastily goes out other door. After a pause, both cautiously reënter.*)

MISS D. I beg your pardon. I only want to get my book.
MISS V. (*haughtily*). I shall not intrude but a moment.
MISS D. (*also haughty*). I really don't care to remain.—I ——
MISS V. Oh, if you were here first —— (*Enter* BARBARA, *bucket of water in one hand, and dripping cloth in the other. As they perceive her, both forget quarrel and frown at her.*) Barbara !—how many times have we told you not to carry your buckets through this room ! You will ruin the carpet.
MISS D. Yes, Barbara, do try to remember !
MISS V. What's that in your other hand ?
BAR. (*holding it out*). Scroob-cloth, ma'am.
MISS D. Oh, Barbara !—and dripping wet.
BAR. Sure, Miss Dorthee, I'll niver bring it through agin. Drat me if ——
MISS V. Barbara !—that atrocious word again !
BAR. Sure, Miss Veronicky, I niver mint to say it.
MISS D. What are you going to do ?

BAR. Scroob the vestibool, ma'am.

MISS V. The idea of coming through the parlor!

MISS D. Do take that dripping cloth out of here! You are spoiling everything.

MISS V. (*to* BAR.). Hurry, hurry!

BAR. Yis'm, yis'm, I'm goin'. [*Exit.*

MISS D. (*sighing*). Isn't she awful?

MISS V. Hopeless!

(*Pause. They remember they are angry at each other.*)

MISS D. Ahem! Did you wish to stay in here?

MISS V. Oh, no, not if I intrude on your privacy.

MISS D. Indeed, sister Veronica, I always like to have you with me, if ——

MISS V. If what, sister Dorothea?

MISS D. If—if—only I do not displease you.

MISS V. By doing something I have especially asked you not to do?

MISS D. But, Veronica dear, I think it is my duty.

MISS V. Oh, of course, Dorothea, if it is your duty—then there is nothing more to be said about it. But you can scarcely expect me to look pleased.

Enter BAR. *with a letter.*

MISS D. Oh, has the postman been here?

MISS V. Barbara, why did you not dry your hands? Just see how you have soiled this envelope!

BAR. (*sorrowfully*). Yis'm.

MISS V. (*looking at envelope*). Why, this is Wednesday. We never get a letter on Wednesday!

MISS D. Of course not. It must be a mistake. There is no one to write on Wednesday!

BAR. Misther Darlin' said as it wuz for the Misses Morton, ma'am.

MISS D. The Misses Morton!—Who could write to the Misses Morton!

MISS D. Who indeed?

MISS V. That is the way it is addressed. But I don't recognize the writing, do you, Dorothea?

MISS D. No. It is not a familiar hand.

MISS V. The postmark is Coltsville.

MISS D. Coltsville! Is it Coltsville?—It can't be from Cousin Richard?

MISS V. Did he go to Coltsville?

MISS D. I am sure that was the name of the place. But this isn't his writing.

BAR. (*uneasily*). Shure, an' beant ye a-going to open the letter and find out, ma'am?

MISS V. Pray go about your work, Barbara. This is a private matter between Miss Dorothea and myself.

BAR. (*unabashed*). I hope it's good news, ma'am.

MISS D. Thank you, Barbara—you mean well!

MISS V. Yes, Barbara, but your scrubbing is waiting.

BAR. Well now, if that isn't God's truth, ma'am!

MISS D. Barbara! (*Exit* BAR. MISS D. *leans over and looks at letter.*) Do you think we ought to open it?

MISS V. We must find out if it is for us.

MISS D. If it only were not Wednesday, I should not feel so timid.

MISS V. We never get a letter on Wednesday.

MISS D. It is a woman's writing. Who can it be?

MISS V. We are the only Misses Morton.

MISS D. The only ones!

MISS V. I suppose we must open it.

MISS D. (*sighing*). There is no other way!

(MISS V. *cautiously breaks the seal.*)

MISS V. (*reading*). "To the Misses Morton, The Dovecote, Fairdale." That surely means us!

MISS D. There can be no doubt of it.

MISS V. (*reading*). "I am writing for your cousin, Mr. Richard Ballsley, who died here three days ago after a very short and painful illness."

MISS D. (*huskily*). Dead!—Cousin Richard dead!

MISS V. How dreadful! (*Continues reading.*) "When the doctor told him he could not live, he asked me as an old friend to write to you and ask if you would not take his dear little girl Letty into your home and bring her up as your own."

MISS D. Oh, Veronica!

MISS V. Dorothea, my dear!

MISS D. How terrible!

MISS V. How could he ask it!

MISS D. His child!

MISS V. An utterly strange child!

MISS D. What—what else does the letter say?

Miss V. (*reading*). "She is a lovely little thing, ten years old."

Miss D. Can it be that long ago?

Miss V. "And though she has now no money of her own, she will come into a snug fortune left her by an uncle, when she is of age. Mr. Ballsley spoke of you as ladies of high principles, such as he would like his child to know and live with. Little Letty is with me. I only wish I might keep her, for she is like a ray of sunshine in the house. Kindly let me hear from you as soon as possible. Very truly yours, Anna Berwyn Grey."

Miss D. Oh, Veronica, what shall we do!

Miss V. We can't possibly take her!

Miss D. (*faintly*). I—I suppose not!

Miss V. We should never be able to call our souls our own again.

Miss D. Poor little thing!

Miss V. She would scratch up the furniture, and frighten the birds.

Miss D. And yet—the poor little child!

Miss V. Yes. But we are only cousins. There can be no claim upon cousins!

Miss D. There must be some nearer relative, I suppose.

Miss V. We simply cannot take her. I wonder at Richard asking such a thing of us under the circumstances. It's preposterous—inhuman! That woman's child!

Miss D. Wouldn't the woman who wrote the letter keep her? What does she say?

Miss V. She says she wishes she might keep her—which means she can't.

Miss D. Perhaps she is too poor.

Miss V. We could pay her. Anything would be better than to have a strange child in the house. (*Enter* Bar. *with bucket.*) Barbara!

Miss D. That bucket!

Miss V. Go through the hallway!

Bar. The saints furgive me, ma'am! I clean furgot agin!

(*Drops rag.*)

Miss D. Oh, look! The scrub cloth!

Miss V. Pick it up. Take care for the bucket!

(Bar. *scrambles around and finally exits.*)

Miss D. (*gasping*). I don't think we can stand her!

Miss V. We must. It is our duty to teach her to be a Christian woman.

Miss D. I suppose it is, sister Veronica, but she wears on my nerves so.

Miss V. Then imagine what a child would do, romping about the house, laughing and screaming.

Miss D. How old did she say the little girl was?

Miss V. Ten years old. Yes—ten. Just Marybell Sharpe's age. And you know what Marybell is! She tracked the whole parlor full of mud the day she was here.

Miss D. And her voice! So loud and coarse!

Miss V. It is almost impossible to subdue children of that age. They are little savages.

Miss D. We—we must find some way out of it, I suppose.

(*Sighs.*)

Miss V. I had better write to the woman. What's her name? Oh, yes. Anna Berwyn Grey. I'll write to Anna Berwyn Grey and tell her that we will pay for the child's board, and ——

Miss D. Clothes. She would have to have clothes, Veronica.

Miss V. Well then, clothes. I would give anything rather than have a great rollicking tomboy around the house.

Miss D. We could make the dresses.

Miss V. We must preserve the quiet of our home from this invasion.

Miss D. They may be getting her ready. It would be dreadful to disappoint them.

Miss V. That is true, Dorothea. It would be wise to write at once. (*Goes to drawer and gets writing-paper.*) Now, what shall we say?

Miss D. Is she a married lady?

Miss V. (*looking at letter*). She does not say. Anna Berwyn Grey. But of course she must be. She was with Richard when he was dying.

Miss D. Oh, then, of course!

Miss V. Then I imagine I should address her as Mrs. Grey.

Miss D. But suppose she shouldn't be married.

Miss V. She must be. If she isn't she ought to be.

Miss D. She certainly ought.

Miss V. Very well then, sister Dorothea, if she ought to be, then as far as we are concerned, she is married.

Miss D. Of course she must be.

Miss V. Then it is settled. (*Writes.*) "My dear Mrs. Grey:—Your kind letter concerning the disposal of our Cousin Richard's child is before us. We thank you so much for writing to us, but ——

Miss D. Well, what are you going to say next?

Miss V. We must not be too abrupt. It might look unkind.

Miss D. Oh, no, we do not want to seem that!

Miss V. Well (*thinking a moment*), how would this do?—"but we feel that our house would be no place for a little girl who is accustomed to the companionship of children."

Miss D. I think that is very tactful, sister Veronica.

Miss V. "We are two lonely women."

Miss D. I don't believe I'd say that. She might think the child would cheer us up.

Miss V. That's so, Dorothea. That will not do. I had better say we are two very quiet people, and the child would be sure to be lonely and homesick in such a dull place.

Miss D. That sounds kinder, and—very genteel.

Miss V. (*continuing*). "But although Mr. Ballsley was only a third cousin, we are interested in the welfare of the child, and would be glad to bear her expenses."

(*Bell rings.*)

Miss D. Was that the bell?

Miss V. I think it was.

Enter Bar., *very untidy.*

Miss D. Barbara, your apron, and your cap.

Miss V. Yes. Hurry as fast as you can. [*Exit* Bar.

Miss D. Who can it be?

Miss V. Not callers, I hope.

Enter Bar., *with huge stiff white cap and apron. Stumbles.*

Miss D. Oh, my!

Miss V. Barbara! [*Exit* Bar.

Bar. (*outside*). Yes, ma'am. Coom right in, coom right in! (*Opens door.*) I'll see if the loidies are home. I'll see. Oh, bless my heart, of coorse they're home, right before my eyes!

Enter BAR., LETTY BALLSLEY *and* MRS. GREY. *Exit* BAR.

MISS V. (*rising*). Good-afternoon. I am Miss Morton. Will you ——

BAR. (*rushing back into the room*). Oh, the card. Here's the card, Miss Veronicky.

MRS. G. I am Mrs. Grey. I don't think we need the card. (*Smiles.*)

MISS V. Mrs. Grey! Anna Berwyn Grey?

MRS. G. Yes.

MISS D. (*eagerly*). Then this is the child?

MRS. G. Yes.

MISS V. Why—why, we were just writing to you!

MRS. G. Yes, I know I was not expected. But I was obliged to go to Packer City on business, and I thought I might as well stop here on my way. Letty, come here, dear. This is your cousin, Miss Morton.

LETTY (*shyly*). How do you do?

MISS V. How do you do, dear? And this is Miss Dorothea.

MISS D. And you are Letty?

(*Takes hand in both of hers and leads her to seat.*)

LETTY. Yes'm. Letitia Dorothea Ballsley.

MISS D. Oh! (*Talks to her.*)

MISS V. Sit down, Mrs. Grey. As I told you, we were just about to write to you.

MRS. G. Yes?

MISS V. We—we felt that it would be a rather serious matter to take so young a child. (LETTY *approaches with flowers in hand.*) What is it, dear?

LETTY. I—I brought you some pink roses from my garden. The violets were for Miss Dorothea, and the roses are for you.

MISS D. Your favorite rose, Veronica! Isn't it odd?

MISS V. Yes. Thank you, Letty. They are certainly lovely.

LETTY. Miss Dorothea says you love flowers, and so do I.

MISS D. (*drawing her away*). Come over here, dear.

MISS V. As I was saying, Mrs. Grey, we feel, Dorothea and I, that it would be almost too great a responsibility. There would be no one for Letty to play with, and ——

MRS. G. She is not accustomed to being with children. Her father was almost her sole companion.

Miss V. But we are very quiet people, Mrs. Grey. We could not entertain her or ——

Mrs. G. Don't you think she might entertain you, Miss Morton? She is such a cheerful little body.

Miss V. We are not used to any confusion. My sister's nerves are sensitive, and a child romping about the house ——

Mrs. G. Oh, Letty isn't noisy. Don't misunderstand me!

Miss V. I see the child is not rough, Mrs. Grey, but ——

Mrs. G. Oh, indeed, Miss Morton, I think Letty would not want to come, if she knew you felt that way about it.

Miss D. Veronica dear, Letty would like to see the garden. Shall I take her out?

Miss V. Let Barbara take her, Dorothea. I should prefer you to talk this matter over with us.

Miss D. Oh, very well, sister. I'll take her out to Barbara.

[*Exit* Miss D. *with* Letty.

Miss V. Don't misunderstand me, Mrs. Grey. It is of the child I am thinking as much as of ourselves. There is nothing for a child to do here. We are very particular. If the child wanted to do the things all children want to do —— Come in, Dorothea. (*As* Miss D. *enters.*) I was telling Mrs. Grey how we felt about having Letty. As I was saying, if the child wanted to do what other children want to do, it would worry us. She would see it, and it would make her unhappy.

Miss D. (*wistfully*). She's not a bit like Marybell Sharpe, Veronica.

Miss V. Very likely she is not, but ——

Mrs. G. Pardon me if I seem insistent. I am thinking only of the poor father's wishes. But is it because you dislike children?

Miss D. Oh, no! Why, Veronica is president of the board of the Orphans' Home.

Miss V. And Dorothea gives large donations to the Children's Hospital.

Mrs. G. Of course there would be the expense of boarding and dressing the child. If you felt that was asking too much ——

Miss V. (*haughtily*). It's not a matter of money, Mrs. Grey.

Miss D. No, indeed, it's not that!

Miss V. Let me assure you, that does not enter into the question at all.

Mrs. G. (*sighing*). Well, of course you know what is best

for you. I am sorry because—I will be frank with you—I do not like the woman who has promised to take her if you do not.

MISS V. (*interested*). Some one else has offered to take her?

MRS. G. Yes. A distant relation of Mr. Ballsley's, I believe. Mrs. Gordon.

MISS D. (*horrified*). Oh! not Mrs. Ray Gordon!

MISS V. Surely not that woman!

MRS. G. Yes. Do you know her?

BOTH. I should think we did!

MISS D. It would be an absolute shame to give that sweet child into her keeping.

MISS V. Why, she's hardly decent!

MISS D. Oh, Veronica, couldn't we ——

MISS V. Hush, Dorothea. Don't be sentimental. Pardon the question, Mrs. Grey. But you were such a good friend to Cousin Richard. It is utterly impossible for you to take Letty yourself?

MRS. G. I am sorry to say it is. You see my husband is a minister, and his health is unfortunately very poor. It therefore falls to my share to attend to a great many of his duties.

MISS V. We would be willing to provide you with all the funds for her education and support.

MRS. G. I would not dare to take the child, though I—I love her already. My time is not my own. It would not be just to her.

MISS V. Where are you staying?

MRS. G. I am on my way to Packer City. I shall leave little Letty with Mrs. Gordon for to-night.

MISS D. Oh, no, Veronica!

MISS V. Impossible!

Enter LETTY *and* BAR.

LETTY. Miss Veronica, I'm going to take all the weeds out of your poppy bed. I'd love to. I'll begin to-morrow morning.

MRS. G. But my dear little girl ——

MISS V. (*with sudden determination*). Very well, Letty. Take off your hat and coat now, and Barbara will show you your little room. (*To* BAR.) The guest room, Barbara.

(BAR. *gasps.*)

MISS D. Oh, sister! (*Joyfully.*)

MISS V. (*firmly*). The guest room, Barbara! (*To* LETTY.) Run along, dear! [*Exeunt* BAR. *and* LETTY.

MRS. G. Am I to understand that the little girl is to stay? You surely would not be so cruel as to ——

MISS V. Certainly she is to stay! (MISS D. *hugs her.*) Dorothea, don't be such a fool. Understand me, Mrs. Grey, I should not do this thing of my own free choice. But Mrs. Ray Gordon. Impossible!

MRS. G. She is determined to have her. She will probably come to see you about it.

MISS V. The matter is quite settled. Please tell her so.

MISS D. (*joyously*). I wanted her the moment I set eyes upon her!

MRS. G. Then I am to leave her here, to-night?

MISS V. Certainly. Has she—has she any clothes?

MRS. G. I brought only a few in this little satchel. But I can send her trunk later. Her wardrobe is not very elaborate.

MISS V. That is of no consequence. Dorothea can run over to Packer City next week.

MRS. G. Well, I must be going. Perhaps it is wrong of me, but I cannot help telling you how glad I am Mrs. Ray Gordon is not to have the child.

MISS D. Hush. Here she comes.

Enter LETTY.

LETTY. Oh, Mrs. Grey, you never saw such a dear room! All pink rosebuds and lace!

MISS V. Some of Dorothea's foolishness. It's entirely too fussy for my taste.

MRS. G. Well, Letty dear, I must be going now. You will be happy in your new home, I am sure.

MISS D. Could you not stay for the night, and attend to your errand in the morning?

LETTY. Oh, please do!

MRS. G. I wish I could, dear, but you know Mr. Grey would never be able to get along without me. Thank you, Miss Dorothea. May I come in once in a while and see Letty?

MISS V. We shall be glad to have you at any time.

LETTY (*clinging to her, tearfully*). Oh, Mrs. Grey, I—I ——

MRS. G. Now, Letty, you know what you promised me!

LETTY (*trying to be calm*). Yes, Mrs. Grey.

MRS. G. (*stooping to kiss her*). Good-bye, dear. Your cousins will let you come to see me too, one of these days, I am sure.

MISS V. Of course, Letty. How would week after next do?

LETTY. Oh, please!

MISS V. Then it is settled. A week from next Friday, Mrs. Grey, Letty shall come to see you. Don't forget!

MRS. G. That is kind of you. Be a good girl, Letty. Good-bye.

ALL. Good-bye. Good-bye. [*Exit* MRS. G.

MISS D. Oh, Veronica, I am so glad you decided to keep her. (*Takes* LETTY *on her lap.*)

MISS V. Don't be too enthusiastic. It's a dangerous experiment.

MISS D. I feel sure it will be all right.

MISS V. Oh, of course you would. Is this your satchel, Letty?

LETTY (*still a little tearful*). Yes'm.

MISS D. Shall I take Letty up to her room and show her where to put her things?

MISS V. Yes, that would be a good idea. Go with your Cousin Dorothea, Letty, and tell her how you want your room arranged. (*Smiles at* MISS D.)

LETTY. My room with the rosebuds! (*Cheering up.*)

MISS D. Come along, dear. [*Exeunt* MISS D. *and* LETTY.

MISS V. (*sitting down by table*). Well! (*Pause.*) I wouldn't have believed it! (*Pause.*) I know we will regret it! (*Pause.*) Richard Ballsley's child. (*Pause.*) Dorothea is crazy about her already. H'm. Well, we're in for it now, anyhow!

Enter BAR. *with the newspaper.*

MISS V. Oh, has the paper come, Barbara?

BAR. Yes'm.

MISS V. Did John bring the groceries too?

BAR. Yes'm, he did. But whin you sees that soap, he's goin' to have the pleasure of takin' it back, I'm thinking.

MISS V. Why, what is the matter with the soap, Barbara?

BAR. Little meagre cakes, ma'am. The smallest he ever brung.

MISS V. Brought, Barbara. There is no such word as "brung."

BAR. (*meekly*). Brought, ma'am.

MISS V. Why are you waiting, Barbara? Is there anything you want?

BAR. Please, ma'am. The wee colleen. Be she a-going to stay?

MISS V. Yes, Barbara. Miss Dorothea and I have asked her to live with us.

BAR. Glory be, ma'am. And it's thankful I am! And be ye goin' to have the tarts for tea in honor of her?

MISS V. Tarts. We never have tarts for tea!

BAR. No'm. Nor children neither. I ain't a-meaning to presume, ma'am, but I thought maybe as the little girl was new, you'd like the tarts to go along of her.

MISS V. (*severely*). Tarts are not good for little girls at night.

BAR. But she's so strange, ma'am, and lonesome like.

MISS V. (*relenting*). Well, maybe they might cheer her up a bit. And, Barbara, fill the blue cup with milk for her, and set her place next to Miss Dorothea.

BAR. Yes'm. I'll not forget, ma'am. [*Exit.*

MISS V. Humph! Barbara too! I see this business is going to upset the whole house.

Enter MISS D. *and* LETTY.

MISS D. See, Veronica, here are Letty's lesson books. We must look them over.

MISS V. Yes, indeed. You will have to tell us all about them, Letty.

MISS D. Here's a speller, and an arithmetic, and—what's this, Letty?

LETTY. That's my history, ma'am—I mean, Cousin Dorothea.

MISS V. History. Seems to me you are rather young to study history, aren't you?

LETTY. Well, you see that's my reading book. Father always said it was foolish to read things that didn't matter, and I might as well be reading something worth while.

MISS V. Oh, of course, if your father said so!

LETTY. He used to always read to me while I made the biscuits.

MISS D. Biscuits!

LETTY. Yes. I know how! Father said they were the

best he ever ate. And he said when I got married he wanted me to know how to do things.

Miss V. Married! My dear, you are too young to talk of such things.

Letty. Oh, do you think so? Well, you see, father and I were alone so much of the time, I guess we talked about nearly everything. And I asked him about getting married, and if he thought I would grow up and get married.

Miss D. Sakes alive, child!

(*Both are horrified.*)

Letty. And he said any nice woman could get married if she really wanted to, he thought—and of course I want to!

Miss V. My dear little girl, you cannot judge of such things!

Letty. Well, of course I know you didn't want to, or you would have, 'cause I asked papa. And he said he knew Miss Dorothea could have, and he was pretty sure about you, too, for he knew of a mighty nice great big major who came to see you an awful lot, and then stopped real sudden, and so ——

Miss V. (*severely*). Letty, never let me hear you talk of this again! It is shocking for a little girl like you to ——

(*Gets up and goes out.*)

Letty. Oh, dear, I—I didn't know.

Miss D. Veronica means, dear, that as a usual thing little girls your age talk about their dolls and their story-books. It is only grown people who talk about "getting married."

Letty (*nearly crying*). I'm dreadfully sorry. I did not —— You see my mamma died when I was very little, and—and ——

Miss D. Never mind; we will not talk about it any more.

Letty. Did I make Miss Veronica very angry? Didn't she like the major?

Miss D. Now listen, Letty. The major hasn't been to see Miss Veronica for a great many years. She doesn't like to hear anybody talk about him, because it makes her feel badly. She—she told him not to come any more, because—well, because she thought it was best. Now I have told you, and I want you to promise me that you will never speak of this again.

Letty. Indeed I never will, Miss Dorothea.

Miss D. Call me Cousin Dorothea, dear.

Letty. I'd love to, Cousin Dorothea. It's my name,

too, you know. Father always thought it was a sweet name. And, do you know he had a picture of you in his desk?

Miss D. (*rising suddenly and going to the window*). Did he?

Letty. Yes. Of course it was taken long ago. I saw it one day and asked him who it was, and he told me. And then he put it away and I never saw it again. You were fatter then, weren't you? But your eyes looked just the same, so kind and gentle. (Miss D. *says nothing, but looks out of the window.* Letty *approaches slowly.*) Have I said something I ought not to, again?

Miss D. (*coming back and sitting down*). No, dear, no. You see it is a long time since we have had a little girl in the house, Letty, and (*putting her arm around her*), it makes us think of all sorts of things we have not thought of for years. Now let us look at the lesson books again. Are you a good speller?

Letty. No, Cousin Dorothea, I might as well tell you, I am awful! Poor father got frightfully out of patience with me!

Miss D. That's too bad. We'll have to see what we can do. How about arithmetic?

Letty. Just try me! (*Proudly.*) I'm not afraid of that! I beat all the boys in the class when I went to school. But father would not let me go any more. (*Sighs.*)

Miss D. He made you stop school?

Letty. Well, you see there was a dreadful girl there, and he ——

Miss D. I see.

(Miss V. *at the door.*)

Miss V. Come in here, Marybell. Bring your friend with you. And Catherine, you come in, too. Letty, I've brought some of the girls in to see you. They will show you the way to school to-morrow. This is Marybell Sharpe, Letty.

Letty. How do you do?

Marybell Sharpe. Hello!

Miss V. And your friend, Marybell?

Mary. Oh, it's Babe McGill. Lives 'round the corner.

Miss V. This is my little Cousin Letty, Babe.

Babe McGill. What's her other name?

Miss V. Ballsley. Letitia Ballsley.

Mary. Gee! Some name!

MISS V. And, come here, Catherine. This is Catherine Pemberton, Letty, and she lives just across the street.

LETTY (*shyly*). How d'ye do, Catherine?

CATHERINE PEMBERTON. How d'ye do, Letty?

LETTY. Will you sit down over here?

MARY. Those your books? (*Points.*)

LETTY. Yes.

MARY. What grade are you in?

LETTY. I—I don't know. You see at the last I didn't go to school. I just studied at home.

BABE. Where's your reader?

LETTY. I haven't any. I read out of the history.

MARY. For pity's sake! How *funny!*

CATH. Do you like to read?

LETTY. Just adore it. Don't you?

CATH. Yes. I have some new books, and you can read them if you like.

MARY. Pooh, it's *lots* more fun to run races. Can you run?

LETTY. I've never tried running races.

MARY. For pity's sake!

BABE. I have a dog. Do you like dogs?

LETTY. I like all kinds of animals. And chickens and flowers and birds.

MISS D. You must get Letty to tell you about her garden.

MARY. Can't she come out for a while?

MISS V. I think it is nearly tea-time now, and I'm afraid Letty is pretty tired. She has been traveling to-day, you see. But she will join you in the morning.

MARY. Oh, all right. Come on, Babe. Let's call for Jimmie.

BABE. Think he'll be home? Good-bye, Letty.

LETTY. Good-bye.

MARY. Good-bye.

CATH. I guess I'll go, too. Mother may be looking for me. Good-bye.

LETTY. I'd like to go to school with you. (*Exeunt* BABE, CATH. *and* MARY. LETTY *to* MISS D.) She's the nicest.

MISS D. Yes. Catherine is more ladylike and gentle. Marybell has a kind heart, but she is a little bit noisy. I am glad, Letty, that you use nice language.

MISS V. Yes, you must be careful. Catherine never uses any slang, and she has very sweet little manners. You will like her.

LETTY. I do like her. May I go to see her?

MISS V. You must wait till she comes to see you, and invites you to come.

LETTY. Oh!

MISS D. Can you sew, Letty?

LETTY. Mrs. Grey was just teaching me. I didn't do very well. But perhaps I can learn.

MISS D. Of course you can.

Enter BAR.

BAR. Miss Veronicky, mim.

MISS V. Yes, Barbara.

BAR. Shall I put them all on, mim?

MISS V. All what?

BAR. Thim as I ast you about.

MISS V. Really, Barbara, you will have to make yourself plainer.

BAR. (*hands to mouth, stage whisper*). Thim tarts, mim.

MISS V. Oh! Yes, of course. Put on plenty.

LETTY (*wistfully*). I wonder, would you mind, Cousin Veronica. May I go up and see the room with the pink rosebuds once more?

MISS V. Of course you may.

LETTY. I'll be so very careful. I'll not get a spot on anything. But, oh, it's so pretty to be all nestled in amongst rosebuds!

MISS V. It's very delicate, my dear. I'm afraid we may have to change it a little.

LETTY. Oh, don't! Please try me. I'll be so careful.

MISS D. I am sure she will, Veronica.

MISS V. Well, run along now. But don't be too long, for tea is nearly ready.

LETTY. All right, Cousin Veronica. [*Exit.*

MISS D. (*enthusiastically*). Veronica, she's a dear!

MISS V. She's quite an agreeable child, but I am afraid she has been allowed to talk too much.

MISS D. She will soon learn.

MISS V. Of course a man could not be expected to know how to bring up a child. It's a blessing Mrs. Grey befriended them. Richard always was a dreamy ne'er-do-well.

MISS D. (*hurt*). Really, Veronica, I think that is putting it a little too strongly.

MISS V. Not a bit too strong, not a bit!

Miss D. That woman he married ——

Miss V. That's just it! *Why* did he marry her? Just out of spite, and you know it. And what man with any backbone would marry out of spite?

Miss D. (*gently*). Cousin Richard was peculiar.

Miss V. I should think he was! Just because you did not fall in with all his wishes ——

Miss D. (*tearfully*). Please, Veronica. I—I can't stand that, you know.

Miss V. (*softly*). Forgive me, Dorothea. But you know how I feel about men. There isn't one of them who can appreciate the difference between a lady and a dressed-up dairy maid. And all they want is flattery and attention!

Enter Letty.

Letty. Did I stay too long?

Miss D. No, dear.

Letty. Oh, it's so pretty. Almost like a garden.

Enter Bar.

Bar. Tea is ready, mim.

Miss V. Oh, very well, Barbara. Come, Letty.

(*They rise and go out.*)

Bar. (*passing near* Letty *and making horn of hands, whispers*). Tarts!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as in Act I. Room slightly changed and freshened as if new things had been added on some one's suggestion. Interval of five and a half years between Acts I and II.*

(*Curtain rises, as* LETTY *enters, followed by three young girls; the little girls of Act I, now in long dresses and grown up.*)

LETTY. Come in here, girls. We can rehearse our parts in this room.

MARY. Oh, dear! I'm so hot! I don't know how I am going to stand all that toggery to-night.

CATH. You ought to be thin, my dear, and then toggery wouldn't bother you so much.

BABE. What flowers do you have to carry, Letty?

LETTY. Pink roses. And we have just quantities of them. I'm in great luck.

MARY. Have you bought your daisies yet, Catherine?

CATH. Yes, I got them this afternoon, at Young's.

LETTY. I think poppies just suit Marybell. She's such a luxurious creature.

MARY. Yes—that's what they usually say about Fatties. Do you think pansies suit Babe, too?

LETTY. Of course they do. Pansies for thoughts. Babe's a pensive thing!

MARY. Pensive—Babe? What a joke!

BABE. Well, I can't see that we are doing much rehearsing, girls.

MARY. I know my part, anyhow.

CATH. I am not at all sure of mine, and every time I look at Letty, I'm certain I am going to laugh.

BABE. Try yours through.

CATH. (*rising and taking a pose*). Ahem! To Zephyr.[1]

[1] If desired, a Folk dance, or songs, or other recitations may be substituted for ones given here.

"Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity;
Imps and cranks and wanton wiles
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek
And love to live in dimple sleek.
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter, holding both his sides:
Come and trip it as you go
On the light fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain Nymph, Sweet Liberty."

BABE. Bravo!—You'll bring down the house!

MARY. Say, Catherine, you looked at Pa Reynolds this morning when you spoke of Wrinkled Care, and I thought the girls near me would explode.

BABE. Poor old Pa! And girls! doesn't Lou Carson look idiotic in that costume? A nymph! She looks more like a playful cow than a nymph.

LETTY. Lou isn't exactly dainty.

CATH. You needn't pity her. She's entirely pleased with herself.

LETTY. Oh, yes, I know that. Come, Babe, I thought you were so anxious to rehearse. Get to work, miss.

BABE (*groaning as she rises*).

"Wisdom in sable garb arrayed,
Immersed in rapturous thoughts profound,
And Melancholy silent maid,
With leaden eye that loves the ground:
Still on thy solemn steps attend
Warm Charity, the general friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity dropping soft the sadly pleasing tear."

(*Sits down.*)

CATH. Bessie loves that part. She's Pity, you know, and she looks real weepy too.

MARY. Bess is so tall and slender. I think she looks lovely in her costume.

BABE. You haven't said yours, Letty.

LETTY (*rising*). Here goes!

"Life of Life! Thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them:
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air free—then screen them
In those locks, where whoso gazes
Faints entangled in their mazes."

BABE. H'm—that's kind of sentimental! Wouldn't you like to see Letty in love, though? She would be a spectacle!

LETTY (*nettled*). I'd like to know why!

MARY. My dear, you'd take it so hard! (*Pinches her.*)

LETTY. Ouch! Take care for my arm!

BABE. How is your arm, Letty?

LETTY. Oh, it's practically well now. I have to be a little careful of it, that's all.

CATH. I never did hear the complete story of that broken arm. I was in New York when it happened, you know.

BABE. That's so, Catherine. Well, you missed a fine sight. I was an eye-witness.

CATH. How did you come to fall off the horse, Letty?

LETTY. Just a bit of foolishness. Lou Carson dared me to ride Blackbird.

MARY. Of course Letty could not stand that!

LETTY. Certainly not! I was obliged to take up the dare. I was getting along beautifully, had just turned into the Braxton road, when along comes Tootsie Mason in his auto. Of course he took pleasure in making an abominable noise, and—well, it got on Blackbird's nerves, and she dispensed with the pleasure of my company!

CATH. Threw you?

LETTY. Head over heels into the road.

CATH. Humph! I should have thought Tootsie would have felt proud of himself.

BABE. My dear, he was nearly reduced to tears. Wanted to take Letty home in the auto. But Major Shelton saw the whole thing, and he was so furious at Tootsie that he would not allow him to come near Letty. So he, the major, took her home himself in his surrey.

CATH. What! The major went to Miss Morton's house!

MARY. (*in an undertone*). Sh! Be careful!

LETTY (*coolly*). Yes. Wasn't it good of him? You know Aunt Ronnie and he had not been on very good terms. I think it was dear of him to bother with me under the circumstances.

BABE. Oh, the major is a trump!

CATH. How about Tootsie? Did he apologize?

MARY. Profusely. Flowers, candy, and books. Nothing is too good for Letty nowadays.

BABE. Humph! I wish something exciting would happen to me.

LETTY. Well, just let me tell you, miss, that a broken arm isn't such a lot of fun. I had a few bruises also that were not the most comforting things in the world.

CATH. How did your Aunt Veronica feel about it? You call her aunt now, don't you? You called her cousin before I went away.

LETTY. Well, you see an "aunt" has more authority. Cousin sounded too friendly, Aunt Ronnie thought.

CATH. (*laughing*). Oho! I see!

BABE. Sakes alive! Don't tell me it is half-past five! Why, I promised to be at Young's at five! It's farewell my own to thee, my dears!

MARY. For me too. Where has the time gone? Hurry up, Catherine.

CATH. I'm coming. Good-bye, Letty.

LETTY. I think I'll pick my roses now.

BABE. Come on, then.

(*Exeunt girls, with wraps, etc. After they are gone,* BAR. *peeps in the room and finding it empty, comes in. Straightens up. Stage business.*)

Enter MISS V.

MISS V. Ah, here you are, Barbara. I want to see you a moment.

BAR. Yis'm.

MISS V. Barbara, I notice you have been making hot biscuits for tea every evening.

BAR. Yis'm. You see Miss Letty she do just be that partial to thim.

MISS V. That's all very kind, Barbara, but too many hot biscuits are very injurious to the digestion.

BAR. The which, mim?

MISS V. They are very bad for the stomach.

BAR. Now, is that really so, mim? And they lookin' so harmless and white, and Miss Letty a-lovin' them so!

MISS V. Miss Letty may love them, and at the same time

they may be very bad for her—that is, too many of them. And I am sure you wouldn't want to see Miss Letty sick, Barbara.

BAR. The saints defend us, no, mim!

MISS V. Or have her pretty pink and white complexion get all yellow and rough?

BAR. Ah, now, Miss Veronicky, and could those pretty little white things do such a shabby trick as that?

MISS V. Indeed they can, Barbara. Why, Mrs. Gunsall attributes all her indigestion to hot biscuits.

BAR. Och, Miss Veronicky! And no wonder! That German Lizzie of Mrs. Gunsall's, she could not make a dacent biscuit to save her sowl! It ud be just like ating brickbats. And no wonder she'd have a bit o' trouble makin' thim go down peaceful like!

MISS V. (*smiling*). Well, there's no fault to be found with your biscuits on that score, Barbara. I'll say that for them. But have you made some for tea to-night?

BAR. Just a wee bit of a pan, Miss Veronicky.

MISS V. (*shaking her head*). I thought so. Well, Barbara, we'll let it go to-night, but, remember, not any to-morrow night!

BAR. Of coorse not, mim. But won't Miss Letty be disappointed, tho'!

MISS V. We can have some rusks. She likes those nearly as well.

BAR. All right, mim. And, excuse me, mim, but you be lookin' handsome in that pretty dress.

MISS V. Now, Barbara, be off with your blarney. You know I am growing to be quite an old lady.

BAR. You're a-growin' younger every day, mim. Sure I'll make a bit of a shrewd guess that Miss Letty do be makin' the whole lot of us over.

MISS V. (*gravely*). I believe she is, Barbara. It's like having sunshine every day to see her about the house.

BAR. That's God's truth, mim.

Enter LETTY.

LETTY. Look, Aunt Ronnie, what beautiful roses I found. Did you ever see anything more perfect? I shall be the envy of all the girls at the festival.

MISS V. I suppose I've not a flower left in my garden.

LETTY. I didn't take a single bud, Aunt Ronnie. The

bushes will be full again by to-morrow. (*To* BAR.) Put them in water for me, will you, Barbara? (*Gives her all but one. Exit* BAR.) Oh, you have on your pretty new gown. How lovely! And I've a pink rose I'm going to put in your hair.

MISS V. Ridiculous! You'll do nothing of the sort. I'm too old to wear flowers.

LETTY. Too old! Why, Aunt Ronnie, you're not old. There's Mrs. Venner, she's seventy, and she always wears flowers. And you would look just darling with this in your hair.

MISS V. (*as* LETTY *approaches*). Letty! Go *away* from me!

LETTY. Please, Aunt Ronnie!

MISS V. Do you want me to look as if I had taken leave of my senses?

Enter MISS D.

LETTY. Here's Auntie Dee. She'll tell you the truth about it. Let her decide.

MISS V. Pooh! Dorothea is as foolish as you are!

LETTY. She wouldn't let me make you look ugly, anyhow. Sit down, like a dear, auntie, do!

MISS V. Well, get through with your nonsense. (*Sits down.*) I suppose I might as well submit as be badgered out of my life!

LETTY. If Auntie Dee says it does not look pretty, out it shall come. Now, be honest, Auntie Dee!

MISS D. I promise!

MISS V. Huh!—As if anybody ever gained anything by disagreeing with you! Ouch! (*Jumps and puts hand to head.*) I knew you'd hurt me!

LETTY. Oh, I'm so sorry! I was so anxious to get it just right. (*Readjusts rose.*) There, does that hurt?

MISS V. (*tartly*). No one can put a stem full of thorns in a person's hair, and not hurt.

LETTY. But does it hurt now, Aunt Ronnie?

MISS V. No-o. Not just this minute, but it probably will later.

LETTY. Oh, I hope not. There, Auntie Dee, now tell the solemn truth. Does that rose look pretty in Aunt Ronnie's hair, or does it not?

MISS D. It certainly does. Look for yourself, Veronica.

Miss V. (*looking, and saying scornfully*). Humph! I look like an idiot!

Letty (*kissing her*). You look like a dear! I wish you were going with us to-night, Aunt Ronnie. It was stupid of Mrs. Venner to give her dinner the same night as Mrs. Carson's festival. I believe she did it for spite!

Miss D. Oh, Letty!

Letty. Well, you know there are spiteful people in the world, Auntie Dee. And Mrs. Venner isn't exactly fond of Mrs. Carson.

Miss V. Gossip. Nothing but gossip! Is your arm well protected, Letty? You must be careful of it for a good while yet. A broken arm is a bad thing to take to a festival.

Letty. Oh, it's quite strong, now.

Miss V. (*scornfully*). Oh, I suppose so!

Letty. I'll be careful, truly.

Miss D. You are going to wear your white wrap to-night, aren't you, Veronica?

Miss V. I certainly am not.

Miss D. Why not, dear? That black one looks so wintry.

Miss V. You seem to forget, Dorothea, that I am no longer a young girl.

Letty (*in the doorway*). Don't worry, Auntie Dee! I've hid the black one. (*Runs out laughing and singing.*)

Miss V. Letty! (*As* Letty's *singing grows fainter.*) This is going too far!

Miss D. (*pleading*). Do it to please the child, Veronica.

Miss V. (*hotly*). To please the child—to please the child! Do you realize, Dorothea, that we spend our whole lives doing things we don't want to, just because it will please *Letty?* That girl will be ruined if we keep on!

Miss D. Do you think she is growing selfish, Veronica?

Miss V. Selfish? I didn't say that. But—well, no child can be indulged as you indulge Letty without becoming spoiled in the end.

Miss D. I should hate to spoil her, Veronica. But I do not believe Letty has a selfish thought in her heart. I don't know how we ever lived without her.

Miss V. I love her just as dearly as you do, but she has her own way too much.

Miss D. Let her have it to-night, Veronica. It is her birthday; we must not mar her evening. She is so happy. We will talk the matter over to-morrow.

Miss V. It will always be "to-morrow" with you, Dorothea. You can't deny her a thing. I shall certainly have to talk to her.

(*Exit* Miss V. *As she goes out* Letty *peeps in the other door.*)

Letty (*cautiously*). Has she gone, Auntie Dee?

Miss D. Yes.

Letty. Was she angry with me?

Miss D. Not very.

Letty. She will not be cross to the major, will she?

Miss D. Of course not!

Letty. Oh, Auntie Dee, I do hope they'll fix it up to-night. I'd be glad to have my other arm broken, if it would do any good.

Miss D. I am afraid that would not help.

Letty. I shall always be so glad it was the major who picked me up. Aunt Ronnie never would have spoken to him of her own accord. Would she?

Miss D. I hardly think she would, dear.

Letty. Of course he had to bring me home, and of course Aunt Ronnie had to be polite to him then.

Miss D. It seemed like the hand of Providence.

Letty. Wasn't it funny at first? I suppose she nearly fainted when she saw who was carrying me in. And when he brought me the basket of fruit the next day, she did not know whether to ask him in or not.

Miss D. Poor Veronica!

Letty (*cheerfully*). She can't make him stay away this time. He is back for good!

Miss D. I hope so.

Letty. I believe she tries to dress her ugliest when he comes, for fear he will think she is being nice to him. She only wore her new gown to-night because Mrs. Venner's dinners are so dressy.

Enter Bar. *with flowers.*

Bar. (*smiling broadly*). For Miss Veronicky, mim.

Miss D. Pink roses! She will never wear them! Take them up-stairs, Barbara.

Letty (*hastily*). Wait!—wouldn't it be better to give them to her just as she goes?

Miss D. I—I don't know. Put them in a cool place, Barbara. [*Exit* Bar.

LETTY. If she has time to *think* about it, she will surely find some excuse, and that would hurt the major's feelings.

MISS D. (*gently*). We must not make her angry, dear.

LETTY (*puckering her brow*). Such a tangle! Oh, Auntie Dee. (*Claps her hands.*) I have an idea. The pink rose in her hair is just the same color, and he'll think —— (*Joyously.*) Oh, Auntie Dee. He'll think she put it there!

MISS D. (*anxiously*). Oh, Letty! I—I am afraid it will not do!

LETTY. Why not? We did not know he was going to send pink roses.

MISS D. No-o. But Vernonica would not want him to think she was trying to flatter him.

LETTY. As if any one could ever think that of Aunt Ronnie! Besides, why shouldn't she be good to the major? Don't you want them to be happy?

MISS D. It isn't that, dear. You—you don't quite understand. It's a matter of principle with Veronica.

LETTY (*listening*). Heavens! Here she comes, and I am not dressed! [*Exit, hastily.*

Enter MISS V.

MISS V. Where is Letty? She really has hidden my black coat.

MISS D. She has gone up-stairs to dress, Veronica.

MISS V. No good can come of such indulgence. The very idea of my having to wear clothes I do not want to wear! It's preposterous!

MISS D. I am not trying to defend Letty, sister, but I really do think the white wrap is more in keeping with that gown.

MISS V. It is a great piece of foolishness anyway, my going to this dinner without you. If I had not been afraid the major would think me ungrateful after his kindness to Letty, I never should have gone.

MISS D. We couldn't let the child go to the festival without a chaperone, and it would have broken her heart not to go.

MISS V. (*irritably*). Everything is against me. Every old gossip in Fairdale will have something to say.

MISS D. Why should you care? I have been thinking a great deal about the past lately, Veronica dear, and I believe I am seeing things in a new way. It seems like a dispensation of Providence, this coming of Letty to our little home. Do

you know, dear, I think we were growing to be two very selfish and self-centered women. We tried to do our duty, but we did not want to be told how. Eighteen years ago ——

Miss V. Oh, don't go back to that, Dorothea!

Miss D. Yes, Veronica, I want to go back to that. I want to talk about it. I think the time has come.

Miss V. (*uneasily*). What is the use of raking up old unhappiness?

Miss D. I think there is a use, Veronica, and I am going to ask you to let me have my way this time.

Miss V. Oh! very well!

Miss D. Veronica, I have never been so happy in my life as I have been in watching this little girl grow and blossom. Hasn't it made you happy too, Veronica?

Miss V. Of course, Dorothea, of course it has.

Miss D. Well, dear, eighteen years ago—how long it seems!—you and I each held a great happiness in her hands. But we did not value it. We wanted our happiness, but we wanted it to come in our own way. When Richard and I quarreled, I would listen to no reasoning. I have always felt that the breach between the major and yourself was my fault.

Miss V. (*hotly*). It was no such thing! He acted like an obstinate, self-willed, tyrannical ——

Miss D. No, Veronica, he acted the part of an unselfish friend. We were too excited to see it then. But I have watched the man all these years. It was you and I who were obstinate and self-willed.

Miss V. (*bitterly*). Did Richard Ballsley treat you fairly?

Miss D. Did I treat Richard Ballsley fairly?

Miss V. (*hotly*). He had no right to lose his temper and leave you in that headlong way.

Miss D. No right? No right? Ah, Veronica, we are not thinking of our rights when we are angry. He was wrong, but I was equally at fault. I could have set him right about the matter, if I had not been too proud. I could have explained. Now he is gone, and though I see it all plainly, it is too late to make reparation. But you, Veronica ——

Miss V. (*coldly*). I did what I thought was right.

Miss D. In anger, Veronica, we have not the power of weighing things justly. The major was trying to help. I understand it all now. It was a generous impulse which moved him to take Richard's part.

Miss V. He might have been a little more generous to *me!*

MISS D. You would not let him, dear. But all these years he has been a faithful friend to us both. When he had a chance to do us a service, he did not let his pride hold him aloof. Do you suppose it was an easy thing for him to bring that child to this house, even injured as she was?

MISS V. No.

MISS D. Do you suppose it was easy for him to come back the second time, not knowing what sort of welcome he might receive?

MISS V. No.

MISS D. Ah, Veronica, he has proved himself bigger, more generous than we! He has proved that no slight and no neglect could destroy his affection for you. I admire him. I respect him! (*Pause.* MISS V. *paces restlessly up and down.* MISS D., *in a low voice.*) As for Richard, if he were here now, I would go to him and confess my cowardice. I think he suffered. I think the woman he married was so unworthy of him that he made his own punishment. I know he regretted it, for he sent his little girl to me. That was his way of expressing his forgiveness to *me*, and of asking mine. And oh, Veronica, if you knew how I love that little girl!

MISS V. (*deeply moved*). I do know—no one could help loving Letty.

MISS D. The child does not remember her mother—she was so young when she died. And she gives me a love that is precious beyond words. But *you*, Veronica! If happiness comes to your door are you going to shut it out? Are you still too proud?

MISS V. (*in a low voice*). I don't know what you mean, I'm sure.

MISS D. You do, Veronica, you do! Stretch out your hand and take it. Don't turn away again, don't!

MISS V. Sh! Letty is coming.

(*Walks to the window.* LETTY *is heard singing outside. Dances into the room.*)

LETTY. Look at me. Look at me! Did you ever see anything prettier?

MISS D. Why, Letty, what conceit!

LETTY. My dress, Auntie Dee, not me! though I'm not so bad, either, now I come to look. (*Looks in glass.*)

MISS D. Why, *Letty!*

LETTY. Well, do you want me to say I'm ugly? It wouldn't be the truth, and you gave me the strictest kind of orders about telling fibs. (*Sees* MISS V. *and slips quietly up to her.*) Are you really, truly angry, Aunt Ronnie?

MISS V. (*without turning*). No, dear.

LETTY. Will you please wear the pretty white cloak?

MISS V. You'd better not talk to me about that white coat. The less said about it, the better for you, miss!

LETTY (*coaxing*). If you don't look at my pretty new dress, I'll know you are angry.

MISS V. Humph!

LETTY. Dear Aunt Ronnie, look at me!

MISS V. (*turning round*). Be off with you! You're so full of flattery now, you can hardly walk.

MISS D. (*tactfully*). Did you give Aunt Ronnie her flowers, dear?

MISS V. (*blushing*). Flowers!

LETTY. Yes. That foolish old major sent you some delectable pink roses. What a waste! If he knew how little you valued such compliments, he'd have sent them to me! I've a mind to keep them anyhow. But I'll let you look at them.

MISS V. (*as* LETTY *gives her the roses*). How perfectly beautiful! But he certainly was foolish to send them.

LETTY. I knew it. I said so! To waste his sweetness on the desert air!

MISS D. How you do chatter, Letty.

(*Noise outside.*)

LETTY. There come the girls. Are you ready, Auntie Dee?

MISS D. Yes. But it is too early to go yet. It is only half-past six.

LETTY (*as* MISS V. *starts out*). Don't go, Aunt Ronnie. The girls will want to see you.

MISS V. Four magpies talking at once! No, Letty, I will really have to be excused. [*Exit hastily.*

Enter BAR.

BAR. The young ladies is here, Miss Letty.

LETTY. Bring them right in, Barbara.

(BAR. *goes out and returns with* MARY., BABE *and* CATH., *all dressed in gala attire, each carrying flowers.*)

MISS D. My! what a festive array. I declare you girls certainly look sweet.

LETTY. See Marybell's new watch, Auntie Dee. Isn't it a beauty?

MISS D. (*looking at it*). It certainly is. Did your father give it to you, dear?

MARY. Yes. It was a birthday present.

MISS D. You girls are nearly of an age, aren't you?

LETTY. Yes. Just a week's difference. Babe, do you remember the first day I came, and you asked me if I liked dogs?

CATH. Yes, and Marybell was so disgusted with you because you said you had never run races.

LETTY. I can beat her all to pieces now. She thinks too much of her dignity to try to race me now.

MARY. Not of my dignity, but of my clothes. I'd stumble over the first pebble I saw.

BABE. What I remember most distinctly is the fact that you studied your reading out of a history. I thought that must be dreadful.

LETTY. Look at Marybell's dress! It's only half buttoned.

CATH. That's just like her! Marybell, you'll surely have to be rich, so you can have a maid to button you in.

MARY. I decided on that long ago, my dear.

MISS D. What did you think of Letty's pictures, girls? Aren't they splendid?

BABE. Why, we haven't seen them! When did they come?

LETTY. This morning.

CATH. Show them to us right away.

LETTY. They are in my room. Want to come up, girls?

MARY. Of course we do.

(*Exeunt girls.* MISS D. *puts her gloves and wrap ready, and smooths her hair.* *Enter* MISS V. *quietly.* MISS D. *turns and sees her.*)

MISS D. Did you see the girls, Veronica? They look lovely.

MISS V. No. I did not want to talk to them. I slipped past them.

MISS D. You are not out of patience with me, Veronica?

MISS V. (*taking* MISS D.'s *face between her hands*). With you, Dorothea? I couldn't be!

(*Kisses her; they stand a moment, and bell rings.*)

MISS D. The bell! That must be the major, dear. Where is your wrap?

Enter BAR.

BAR. It is Major Shelton, mim. And please, mim, he says he will wait on the verandy.

MISS V. Very well, Barbara. Tell him I shall be ready in a minute. [*Exit* BAR.

(MISS D. *holds wrap, then takes* MISS V.'S *hands and looks earnestly at her.*)

MISS D. Veronica, dear?

MISS V. Yes, Dorothea.

MISS D. I—I made a foolish mistake once, long ago. I hurt you and I hurt myself. I am glad I am not going with you to-night. I—I wish we could undo the harm, Veronica. (*Pause.* MISS V. *keeps eyes on floor.*) Go, Veronica, go! The major is waiting! (*Gives her roses.*) And, Veronica, forget your pride!

MISS V. I will try.

(*Exit* MISS V. MISS D. *stands in the middle of the room with her face in her hands.*)

Enter BAR.

BAR. (*anxiously*). Ah, Miss Dorthee, ah, mim, ye beant crying, be ye?

MISS D. No, Barbara, no. I could not be crying, for I am very, very happy to-night.

BAR. But there be tears on your cheeks, mim. And thim are niver happy things.

MISS D. These are happy ones, Barbara.

BAR. The Lord be praised, mim! It would be like to break my heart if you should find cause for weepin'.

MISS D. Thank you, Barbara. (*Noise outside.*) There

come the girls, Barbara. Don't you want to see their pretty dresses?

BAR. Sure, and I do that, Miss Dorthee.

MISS D. Come in, girls, and let Barbara see your pretty frocks.

Enter girls. BAR. *inspects them carefully.*

BAR. Howly saints, but ain't ye like a bookay of flowers, though! (*Goes all around them, then stands with hands on hips.*) What stuff be this, Miss Babe? (*Feels it.*)

BABE (*smiling*). It's silk mull, Barbara.

BAR. My, ain't it wonderful fine, though! And look at the long skirts on the colleens, would ye?

CATH. Well, we are grown up, Barbara.

BAR. That ye be, indade!

MISS D. Come, girls, I think we must be going now. It's nearly seven o'clock.

LETTY. Gracious, we'll have to hurry. Get your things together, girls.

BABE. Here's your flowers, Catherine.

MARY. There! I left my fan at home.

CATH. Never mind. I'll lend you mine.

LETTY. Go on out, girls. I'll be with you in a minute. (*Exit all but* MISS D. *and* LETTY.) Oh, Auntie Dee, I saw Aunt Ronnie go, and she had on her white coat. And, Auntie Dee, she took the roses!

MISS D. Yes, dear.

LETTY. I wanted her to look pretty. I—I wanted the major to think she looked pretty. He—he does like her, doesn't he, Auntie Dee?

MISS D. I am sure he does, Letty.

LETTY (*softly*). You told me about it a long time ago, you know.

MISS D. Yes. I remember.

LETTY. And, Auntie Dee, before I go to-night, I want to tell you just one thing. I—I was so little when my mother died—I cannot remember her. But I want to tell you, Auntie Dee, that I think I must love *you* as I would have loved a mother—if I had one.

MISS D. (*holding* LETTY'S *hand to her breast*). You could not be dearer to me, Letty, if you were my own child. You have brought back my lost youth to me!

GIRLS (*calling from outside*). Come on, Letty. Hurry up!

LETTY. In a minute, girls. And, Auntie Dee, I want to be with you always—as long as I live!

MISS D. (*tenderly*). I shall stay with you as long as you *want* me, Letty dear.

LETTY. Then that will be always!

MISS D. Forever and always!

(*They embrace.*)

CURTAIN

DEC 6 1913

THE REBELLION OF MRS. BARCLAY

A Comedy of Domestic Life

In Two Acts

By May E. Countryman

Three male, six female characters. Costumes modern; scenery, easy interiors. Plays one hour and three quarters. A clever and amusing comedy with a very popular cast; all the parts evenly good. There are many Mr. Barclays making their homes more or less uncomfortable all over this country, and Mrs. Barclay's method of curing her particular one will be sympathetically received. Good Irish comedy parts, male and female. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

MORTON BARCLAY.
ROGER STUART, *a neighbor.*
DENNIS O'HARA.
ETHEL BARCLAY, *Morton's wife.*
RUTH CARTER, *Ethel's sister.*
MRS. BROWN, *Morton's sister.*
CORA, *her daughter.*
ELSIE STUART, *Roger's sister.*
MARY ANN O'CONNOR.

PA'S NEW HOUSEKEEPER

A Farce in One Act

By Charles S. Bird

Three male, two female characters. Modern costumes; scenery, a simple interior or none at all. Plays forty minutes. A roaring farce of the "Charley's Aunt" order, admirably suited for high-school performance. Jack Brown, visiting his chum, is tempted by his success in college theatricals to make up in the character of the new housekeeper, an attractive widow, who is expected but does not arrive. He takes in everybody and mixes things up generally. All the parts are first rate and the piece full of laughs and action. Strongly recommended.

Price, 15 cents

A PRODIGAL SON

A Comedy in One Act

By Raymond M. Robinson

Two male, three female characters. Costumes modern; scenery, an easy interior. Plays half an hour. A very original and amusing bit of fooling, easy to do and sure to please. The leading character is a tramp and full of opportunity. Well recommended.

Price, 15 cents

New Plays

LOST—A CHAPERON

A Comedy in Three Acts

By Courtney Bruerton and W. S. Maulsby

Six male, nine female characters. Costumes modern; scenery, an interior and an easy exterior. Plays a full evening. An excellent comedy with the true college atmosphere but with its scenes away from actual college life. A breezy lot of college girls in camp lose their chaperon for twenty-four hours, and are provided by a camp of college boys across the lake with plenty of excitement. The parts are all good and of almost equal opportunity, the situations are very funny and the lines full of laughs. This is sure to be liked by the young people for whom it is intended, and is strongly recommended for high-school performance. *Price, 25 cents.*

CHARACTERS

GEORGE HIGGINS, *a Tuft's A. B.* . . .	Ernest S. Swenson
JACK ABBOTT, FRED LAWTON, *Tuft's sub-freshmen, camping with Higgins* . .	Stanley M. Brown Arthur J. Anderson
RAYMOND FITZHENRY, *a Harvard student*	Arthur T. Hale
DICK NORTON, TOM CROSBY, *off-hill engineers* . .	Ernest A. Larrabee Ferdinand Bryham
MARJORIE TYNDALL, *George's cousin; a Smith girl*	Helen J. Martin
ALICE BENNETT, AGNES ARABELLA BATES, RUTH FRENCH, BLANCHE WESTCOTT, *Jackson girls*	Dorothy F. Entwistle Edith H. Bradford Marjorie L. Henry Beatrice L. Davis
MRS. HIGGINS, *the chaperon. George's mother*	Effie M. Ritchie
MRS. SPARROW, *a farmer's wife.* (*Not in the original cast.*)	
LIZZIE, MANDY, *her daughters.*	

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—The Girls' Camp at Sherwood, 7 A. M.
ACT II.—The Fellows' Camp at Sherwood, 8 A. M.
ACT III.—Same as Act I, 10 A. M.

A BRIDE FROM HOME

A Vaudeville Sketch in One Act

By Willis Steell

Two male, two female characters. Costumes modern; scene, an interior. Plays twenty minutes. A capital sketch of Hebrew life and character, combining good comedy with genuine pathos. Moves very swiftly and is very effective. Can be strongly recommended for either vaudeville use or for amateur theatricals. *Price, 15 cents.*

RED ACRE FARM

A Rural Comedy Drama in Three Acts by Gordan V. May. Seven males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, one interior, one exterior. Plays two hours. An easy and entertaining play with a well-balanced cast of characters. The story is strong and sympathetic and the comedy element varied and amusing. Barnaby Strutt is a great part for a good comedian; "Junior" a close second. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

THE COUNTRY MINISTER

A Comedy Drama in Five Acts by Arthur Lewis Tubbs. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery not difficult. Plays a full evening. A very sympathetic piece, of powerful dramatic interest; strong and varied comedy relieves the serious plot. Ralph Underwood, the minister, is a great part, and Roxy a strong soubrette; all parts are good and full of opportunity. Clean, bright and strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

THE COLONEL'S MAID

A Comedy in Three Acts by C. Leona Dalrymple. Six males, three females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening. An exceptionally bright and amusing comedy, full of action; all the parts good. Capital Chinese low comedy part; two first-class old men. This is a very exceptional piece and can be strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

MOSE

A Comedy in Three Acts by C. W. Miles. Eleven males, ten females. Scenery, two interiors; costumes, modern. Plays an hour and a half. A lively college farce, full of the true college spirit. Its cast is large, but many of the parts are small and incidental. Introduces a good deal of singing, which will serve to lengthen the performance. Recommended highly for co-educational colleges. *Price, 15 cents*

OUR WIVES

A Farce in Three Acts by Anthony E. Wills. Seven males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours and a half. A bustling, up-to-date farce, full of movement and action; all the parts good and effective; easy to produce; just the thing for an experienced amateur club and hard to spoil, even in the hands of less practical players. Free for amateur performance. *Price, 25 cents*

THE SISTERHOOD OF BRIDGET

A Farce in Three Acts by Robert Elwin Ford. Seven males, six females. Costumes, modern; scenery, easy interiors. Plays two hours. An easy, effective and very humorous piece turning upon the always interesting servant girl question. A very unusual number of comedy parts; all the parts good. Easy to get up and well recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

THE TRAMPS' CONVENTION

An Entertainment in One Scene

For Male Characters Only

By Jessie A. Kelley

Seventeen male characters. Costumes typical tramp dress; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a half. An entertainment in the vaudeville class, like this author's other pieces, intended for local treatment and with possibilities of unlimited fun under such treatment. Music can be introduced, if desired, though this is not necessary or called for. The opening is very funny and original and the finish—The Ananias Club—can be worked up to any extent. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

CHARACTERS

DUSTY BOB, *President of Convention.*
HAPPY HOOLIGAN, *who tells how to deal with the dog.*
GENTLEMAN JIM, *who speaks about courts and cops.*
HEALTHY TIM, *an applicant for the Ananias Club.*
SUNNY MIKE, *another applicant for the Ananias Club.*
DIRTY JOE, *who tells methods for getting food.*
TIRED TIM, *still another Ananias.*
FROSTY FINNEGAN, *another applicant.*
LAZY LOGAN, *too lazy to wink.*
TATTERED RAGONS, *very successful in avoiding work.*
DUSTY RHODES, *who also wants to join the Ananias club.*
HOBO JAKE, *who gives some pointers on the drink question.*
TRAMPING MUGGS, *another Ananias.*
HUNGRY DAN, *another applicant.*
HATLESS HAL, *the successful competitor for the Ananias Club.*
FROWSY FILTHY, *who clothes them all.*
THE JANITOR.

THE DAY THAT LINCOLN DIED

A Play in One Act

By Prescott Warren and Will Hutchins

Five male, two female characters. Costumes modern; scene, an easy exterior. Plays thirty minutes. A very pretty and effective little play admirably suited for a Lincoln Day entertainment. Capable even in unskilled hands of great pathos, it offers plenty of comedy, and is a piece that we can heartily recommend. The great personality that it celebrates brings out whatever of honesty and sincerity there is in the thing it touches, and so it befalls that in this little play the true Lincoln spirit is movingly embodied. Professional stage-rights reserved.

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THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH Drama in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interiors. Plays a full evening.

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